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first seventy-five years of this period of turbulence stemmed from the unique experience of the province in relation to the ruling Ch'ing Dynasty and to the outside world. Secret societies kept alive bitter memories of ruthless persecution in the early years of the Ch'ing Dynasty and schemes for restoring the previous Ming Dynasty. A small but significant part of the province's coastal population had long filled the atypical and despised role of businessman for the nation. From Kwangtung had also come the great majority of Chinese overseas migration. These emigrants sent letters home from Southeast Asia, the Americas, Australia, and Hawaii. Many returned with wealth and ideas acquired abroad. As a result, the Cantonese and their neighbors in the surrounding territory became aware of new concepts and the actualities of the outside world long before the rest of China began to doubt the superiority of the Chinese state and way of life.[22]

The coastal area of Kwangtung was also the first place in China to experience the adverse effects of the western penetration. The introduction of opium into the country by the British at the beginning of the nineteenth century turned China's trade from a favorable to an unfavorable

22. H. F. MacNair, China in Revolution: An Analysis of Politics and Militarism Under the Republic, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1931, pp. 6-7.

1:Stanford U. S-4, 5 1956 AF14 Central China AF14

balance. In its wake came a rise in prices. The inflation hit hardest at the peasants and other poor classes in the vicinity of Canton, i.e., in eastern Kwangsi and southern Kwangtung.[23] Their livelihood was further reduced when English manufactured goods began to displace the handicraft industry on which the Chinese peasant relied for a necessary supplement to his farm income. The hardships, discontents, and resentments against the ruling power were further intensified by drought and famine. The result was the Taiping Rebellion.

C. The Taiping Rebellion

The rebellion started in Kwangsi just before the middle of the nineteenth century as disorganized pillaging and robbing by secret societies and bandit gangs.[24] These traditional outlets for social discontent were often indistinguishable one from the other and frequently became the nuclei for movements seeking political power. At the same time, numbers of Canton's businessmen and gentry became disgusted with Manchu corruption

23. H. B. Morse, The International Relations of the Chinese Empire, Vol. I, London, Longmans, Green and Co., 1910, pp. 173-92. Also see Teng Ssu-yü, New Light on the History of the Taiping Rebellion, Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1950, pp. 43-47, which includes an analysis by Tseng Kuo-fan of the causes of unrest in 1852.

24. Teng, op. cit., p. 48.